



Minnesota Department of Corrections Strategic Plan

2020 – 2022

Introduction

At the Minnesota Department of Corrections, we work to transform lives for a safer Minnesota using a person-centered approach. With a focus on public safety, including the well-being of people committed to our custody and our staff, we prioritize strategies that hold people accountable for the offenses they commit while giving them the tools they need to succeed as they transition back to our communities.

Our responsibilities and work are rooted in Chapter 241 of Minnesota statutes. Under Minnesota law, we are responsible for the “care, custody, and rehabilitation” of anyone committed to the Commissioner by the courts. Our mission, structure, and work are grounded in this statutory directive.

The individuals committed to the Department can be incarcerated in our correctional facilities or under our supervision in the community. Regardless of their custody status, our mindset is the same: a person’s path to rejoining their community starts on the day they begin serving their sentence.

We view every day that follows as an opportunity. We have an opportunity as a department to make Minnesota a safer place to live by identifying and implementing effective strategies to transform lives. Our officers, agents, case managers, and other employees have an opportunity to impact the lives of the people with whom they work. Approximately 7,500 individuals in our 10 correctional facilities and approximately 104,000 people under DOC community supervision by the DOC and community corrections partners have an opportunity to transform their lives through accountability and the connections we help them build - to our communities, needed mental and chemical health resources, education, job training and employment, and other supports and structures they will need to move back to our communities.

Strategic Planning

Governor Tim Walz directed all state agencies to craft or update existing strategic plans by Spring of 2020 because progress is best achieved when organizations set bold goals, work collaboratively, monitor progress, and make course corrections when needed.

Strategic planning is the leadership process to craft a vision for future success and determine the best goals, strategies, and key measures to achieve desired outcomes. It sets the conditions for confronting realities, identifying barriers, examining social and economic trends, and driving actions.

Commissioner Paul Schnell directed his team to write a new strategic plan for the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) given his assessment of the work that is required to build a stronger DOC. We must align our resources with our focus on public safety, the transformation of the lives of the people in our custody, and employee safety and well-being. Organizational culture, including safety, must be improved while delivering exceptional services to the public. Old ways of doing things have to be updated and solutions must be found.

We must aim higher and reach further through a commitment to a person-centered approach, the true Minnesota model for corrections and rehabilitation.

Employee Engagement. All correctional professionals are charged with ensuring that the level of professionalism is one that reflects and mirrors our mission and strategic plan. The professional responsibility of individuals employed by the department at all levels shall be to believe in and support the mission of our agency and overall team. For this strategic plan to be effective all correctional professionals must be engaged in this transformational and transparent process.

The Commissioner's Office convened more than 40 engagement sessions to listen to problems and solutions from hundreds of DOC employees working in our facilities and field offices. An update on strategic planning was sent to all employees on November 21, 2019, including an invitation for feedback. Over 270 managers and employees responded with constructive input. Ten different strategic work groups comprised of management and front-line staff brainstormed, deliberated options, and delivered dozens of recommendations to the Commissioner's Office at the end of 2019. This document summarizes the recommendations (1) from the work groups that have been approved and (2) those that were added by the Commissioner's Office.

Community Engagement. The Commissioner's Office shared the draft plan with more than 1,900 stakeholders and partners through personal outreach by senior leaders within the agency as well as an invitation to attend one of two town hall meetings scheduled in late February 2020. Both town hall meetings were streamed using Facebook Live, allowing stakeholders and partners to engage by listening, asking questions using the provided technology, and having their questions answered during the meeting. Over 60 individuals attended the meetings and more than 1,000 joined for the Facebook Live event.

One Minnesota Plan

Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan, and leaders of their administration have had the immense privilege of traveling across the state to meet with thousands of Minnesotans in our communities. The following mission, vision, guiding principles, and priorities reflect common themes from these conversations. These core components of the One Minnesota Plan, combined with ongoing input from Minnesotans, guides the efforts outlined in our agency's strategic plan.

This section of the plan states explicitly how our agency's plan aligns with the One Minnesota Plan's priority areas and, where applicable, using quantifiable goals. This integration is critical, as one of the strategies embedded in the One Minnesota Plan is that each agency will develop and execute its own strategic plan that aligns with the administration's priorities and guides the work of the agency.

Each agency is working to realize the One Minnesota Plan's vision: to make Minnesota the best state in the country for our kids to grow up in, and to do so in a collaborative way that brings people together and builds One Minnesota. Each agency is supporting work in the priority areas and working to embed the guiding principles of the Walz Administration into their organizational culture.

Mission

Improve the lives of all Minnesotans by working collaboratively to implement policies that achieve results.

Vision

Minnesota is the best state in the country for children to grow up in - those of all races, ethnicities, religions, economic statuses, gender identities, sexual orientations, (dis)abilities, and zip codes.

Guiding Principles

- Practice servant leadership
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Do the right thing, especially when it is difficult
- Ask how your actions are reinforcing or removing structural inequity
- Promote the common good over narrow special interests
- Be accessible, transparent, and accountable
- Include voices from communities who will be most impacted

Priorities

Minnesota does best when state agencies and community partners collaborate to achieve common goals. We will solve problems in education, health care, environment and energy, housing, jobs, transportation, and so much more by focusing on these key priorities:

- Healthy Minnesotans and COVID-19 Protection
- Economic Recovery and Working Minnesotans
- Children and Families
- Equity and Inclusion
- Fiscal Accountability and Measurable Results
- Minnesota's Environment

One Minnesota Priorities

Healthy Minnesotans & COVID-19 Protection

- Provide incarcerated persons with the health care needed to function successfully while incarcerated and access to health care upon reentry while under community supervision.
- Continue to implement transmission mitigation plans to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among DOC staff and the people we serve.

Economic Recovery & Working Minnesotans

- Increase the number of people released from prison who, within 30 days, obtain housing, meaningful employment, enroll in educational programming, or actively engage in community-based treatment to 90 percent.

Children and Families

- Play a key role in the Minnesota Children's Cabinet, including leadership on cross-agency strategies to promote mental health and well-being and providing education across the enterprise on the impact of incarceration on children and families. The Department of Corrections is also deeply involved in the Cabinet's work on its other three priorities: (1) healthy beginnings, (2) housing stability for children, youth, and families, and (3) childcare and education.
- Reduce the disproportionate rate of American Indians and youth of color in the juvenile justice system by 20 percent.
- Grow the work of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) to assist local communities in developing strategies to meet the needs of youth to divert them from entering the criminal justice system and keeping them in the community and involved in educational programming.
- Offer Victim Academy-style training to the women who are incarcerated at MCF-SHK to provide education about healthy relationships, the resources that are available, and how to seek assistance in the community.
- Develop an integrated system of victim services that blends agency and existing community-based partners to promote continuity of effective services.
- Develop agreements for domestic violence intervention programming with community partners.
- Develop agreements between DOC correctional facilities and local victim services agencies to create a rapid, robust, and localized PREA response.

- Improve the experience and outcomes for incarcerated parents and children of the incarcerated by seeking federal and other grant opportunities while partnering with stakeholders and partners to integrate all efforts.

Equity and Inclusion

- Reduce the disparate impact of the criminal justice system on communities of color and indigenous people while keeping communities safe and united.
- Promote diversity and equity focused hiring and retention practices to retain at least 75 percent of newly hired employees for at least two years and achieve this retention rate for American Indians, people of color, people who have a disability, and Veterans to reflect the communities we serve and support employees feeling comfortable at work.
- Grow employee intercultural competence by offering appropriate and relevant training and employee development opportunities.
- Review and update agency policies and procedures to reflect a more equitable agency culture.

Fiscal Accountability and Measurable Results

- Maximize the responsible stewardship of agency resources through targeted savings, reallocated to strategic priorities – realized savings and reallocation are internally and externally reported.

Minnesota's Environment

- Commit to environmentally sustainable practices, including greenhouse gas emissions reductions, consistent with the goals outlined in Executive Order 19-27.
- Continue to make strides toward satisfying sustainability goals through standardized practices, facility upgrades and retrofits, communication and training, and project planning that reflects resources constraints and includes thoughtful evaluation of innovative technologies where practical.

MN DOC Strategic Plan

This MN DOC Strategic Plan came together through a process of engagement that occurred over more than one year. A large cross-section of DOC employees, partners, and others gave input, asked hard questions, and provided valuable insights throughout 2019 and early 2020. Many joined the DOC executive leadership team for candid conversations about the history of the agency, frustrations with current operations, external trends, and potential solutions.

With this input, along with guidance from Commissioner Paul Schnell and others, the DOC established a new mission statement, vision, values, and leadership philosophy. To connect all staff with the organization's central strategy for carrying out our mission, the department has adopted a Person-Centered Approach to all agency operations. The person-centered approach includes the following elements:

- A comprehensive intake and assessment process focusing on all components of the person's life.
- Multi-disciplinary team supports to help the individuals we serve understand their strengths along with their challenges.
- Development of an individualized and front-end loaded program-plan developed in a truly collaborative process by the person being served and our staff.
- A program plan that is uniquely tailored to address the individualized needs of the person being served.
- Exploration of legislative strategies to incentivize individual change and transformation.

The person-centered approach also applies to DOC staff. Our emphasis on a person-centered approach will similarly be applied to our colleagues. We believe that giving focus to the strengths, interests, lived experiences, and diversity of each other will improve our organizational culture in meaningful ways that will help us advance our service model and improve morale.

The agenda going forward recognizes our need to deliver transformative programming while acknowledging the profound economic challenges Minnesota faces as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a starting point, we believe that the person-centered approach can be initiated through a realignment of our existing resources. Through comprehensive assessment and programming service realignment, system-involved people will realize renewed opportunity for true and measurable change. We achieve this through an evidence-based and outcome-focused workflow that puts the needs of those we serve first. We also acknowledge that the people most directly impacted by agency decisions and actions need to have a voice in the process. That is why the executive leadership team will be working with senior leaders, wardens and their teams, and others to engage both incarcerated people and those under community supervision around relevant and appropriate parts of the MN DOC Strategic Plan.

This plan is built on community engagement and it exists only because of the constructive participation of so many diverse groups of people. The discussions have already provided important perspective and thoughtful

critique of the DOC’s work. Ongoing engagement with community stakeholders and government partners is an important initiative contained in this plan. What leaders continue to learn through these meaningful relationships will continue to shape the work, inform the values, and improve the services to the people of Minnesota.

MN DOC Strategic Plan

Building Blocks

Mission

Transforming lives for a safer Minnesota.

Vision

Achieving justice through promotion of racial equity, restoration from harm, and community connectedness.

Values

- Safety
- Dignity
- Honesty
- Service
- Equity
- Fairness
- Respect

Leadership Philosophy

Create successful experiences for others.

Priorities

Minnesota does best when government works with communities to achieve common goals. We will make progress on safety, criminal justice reform, education, and so much more by focusing on the creation and implementation of our person-centered approach to:

- Agency Reorganization
- Transformative Programming
- Safety and Wellbeing

DOC Strategic Priorities

Agency Reorganization

- Reorganize the department to break down silos, improve communication both vertically and horizontally, increase cross-unit efficiencies, improve agency leadership awareness, and reduce costs.
- Develop a comprehensive intake, assessment, and program planning process that focuses on the human being, not the conviction, to achieve transformation with the goal of achieving zero warehousing.
- Establish and implement agency research and performance measurement systems to inform organizational decision-making and public transparency.
- Practice servant leadership at every level within the agency to grow and develop staff, build trusting teams, and achieve results.

Transformative Programming

- Increase public engagement, in the creation and revision of agency programs and policies, particularly those impacted by them.
- Increase the use of evidence-based practices in the rehabilitation of those who are incarcerated, or under supervision.
- Increase the number of people released from prison who, within 30 days, obtain housing, meaningful employment, enroll in educational programming, or actively engage in community-based treatment by 90 percent.
- Increase a continuum of community intervention partnerships who embrace effective delivery of community-based programs to address needs so client may remain safely in community.
- Reduce the disproportionate rate of American Indians and youth of color in the juvenile justice system by 20 percent.
- Reduce the number of technical readmissions to prison by 70 percent overall, including American Indians and Minnesotans of color, through effective utilization of community supervision and supportive services.
- Increase the number of people in prison enrolled in full-time classroom college by 400 percent and enroll 250 people in new pathways integrating DOC technical training with Minnesota State associate degrees.
- Improve experience and outcomes for incarcerated parents and their children.

Safety and Wellbeing

- Continue to implement transmission mitigation plans to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among DOC staff and the people we serve.
- Protect all staff, currently incarcerated individuals, victim survivors and clients under supervision from additional harm and injury.

- Practice equity and inclusion to transform the workplace culture to a healthier and more successful environment for each other and for those we serve.
- Improve the quality of the experiences of new employees entering the agency.
- Embed a culture of wellbeing across the agency informed by the engagement and activities of the agency's peer support team.
- Provide sufficient resources and effective training to DOC staff and community partners to reach zero re-victimization of victim survivors.
- Provide incarcerated persons with the health care needed to function successfully while incarcerated and access to healthcare upon reentry while under community supervision.